WINE BUSINESS MONTHLY

# Winemaker of the Month: Matt Crafton

"I normally open WBM to Mark Greenspan's monthly column on grape growing, either in print or online. His articles are always informative and he strikes an effective (and I'm sure difficult) balance between what is interesting and what is practical in the vineyard.

"Over the years, my favorite articles have been the 'Varietal Focus' series. Rather than anything specific, I love seeing the diversity of thought across the entire spectrum of people and producers through the lens of a single grape variety."

**NAME AND TITLE:** Matt Crafton, winemaker

**WINERY NAME AND LOCATION:** Chateau Montelena, Calistoga, CA

**ANNUAL CASE PRODUCTION:** 40,000 cases

**PLANTED ACRES:** 200

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**CAREER BACKGROUND:** I started at the very bottom, dragging hoses in the Virginia wine industry, with a degree in economics from UVA, naturally. But I loved every minute of it. I learned early on to seek out effective people, winemakers and viticulturalists who've found success through high standards and tenacity. That path led me though vineyards and cellars in both Napa and Sonoma over the next few years. After graduating from UC Davis in 2008, I found myself with a one-year position at Chateau Montelena, which is now approaching year 11.

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE?** I wish there were only one. I would say listening more effectively and inspiring greatness in others. I think many of us have succeeded because we are makers, used to controlling efforts and outcomes. But I've realized that relationship isn't linear, especially at our level. More control doesn't always lead to better outcomes. So, now, as we drive quality and excellence in the winery, I focus on making smarter decisions while cultivating ownership and creativity in our people, which all starts with listening.

**VARIETIES THAT YOUR WINERY IS KNOWN FOR:** Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Zinfandel and Riesling